

**Mayor Muriel Bowser
Inauguration Remarks as Delivered
January 2, 2015**

Well good morning. Thank you for joining us here today. It's indeed the greatest honor of my life to be sworn in as Mayor of my hometown.

Today, as we begin a new year, we come together to renew our commitment to this city.

Grateful for God's love and mercy.

Knowing that we build on the work of generations of Washingtonians who have fought to make this city a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

And knowing that now, the responsibility is ours.

Knowing That We Are Washington, D.C.

It's a new day in Washington – a fresh start for all of our families that call DC home.

It's a time to reinvent our government, making it better, more efficient, and dedicated to supporting all of our families.

Two months ago, we came together on Election Day to re-affirm our Democratic values:
That each of us is equal in the eyes of God and our government,
That every Washingtonian deserves a fair shot and a seat at the table,
That every Washingtonian deserves the opportunity to live in a safe and affordable home,
And that the Middle Class is worth protecting and fighting for.

In this administration, a Bowser Administration, we're going to fight for those values.

Everybody knows by now that I am Joan and Joe Bowser's youngest daughter.

You know that I have proudly served Riggs Park and Ward 4 on the Council for the last seven and a half years. I walked in the footsteps of Arrington, Charlene and Adrian, and I continue to be grateful for the love and trust of the people who elected me three times.

You know that my folks live in Ward 5, my sister in Ward 8, two of my brothers in Ward 6 and Ward 7 and me in Ward 4 —We are Washington, D.C.

What you might not know is that I find peace in Rock Creek Park, and to re-set and re-center I just have to see the ocean every now and then.

If you're like me, you enjoy one of the best views of the City, from the vista just in front of Our Lady of Perpetual Help overlooking our great Anacostia River.

You probably know by now that I'm fiercely loyal and disciplined --and not easily moved from a winning plan.

And you've probably learned recently that I'm not scared of a challenge, I won't run from a debate—actually I kind of enjoyed them.

I tell anyone that I can find that I'm a native Washingtonian—not to divide us—but because I'm proud.

I bet you don't know this though one of the single biggest surprises and delights of this campaign was the reaction I got from little girls—the 8 year olds for sure—they watched me, they cheered me on and they inspired me to keep pushing, to live up to their hopes and dreams.

You probably know that there are a handful of women who run big cities – Stephanie Rawlings-Blake from Baltimore is here with us today... Annise Parker, and Aja Brown are among them as well—And today—because of you—I am one, too.

Thank you, Washington DC.

When I look at our city, I see our promise...and I see our great potential.

And today, we inherit past successes, and failures, and overdue promises...but most of all, we inherit the great expectations of a deserving people.

Today, we cannot...and will not...be satisfied with where we are, with the status quo.

Today our city as much as we progressed, we know that there are challenges to our progress. On day one, I face

A quarter billion dollar budget deficit when we walk in the door

We know that we have stalled projects that must get started again

We know that we have ballooning construction costs in some of our big priority projects

And shrinking borrowing capacity that will force us to make tough choices about our priorities.

But we will confront our challenges head-on. Not tomorrow, but today, and every day.

So here is my promise: we will build a government that this city deserves,

I am a steward of this government. This government is not just ours...it belongs to this generation and the next and the one after that. So it's my charge to make it greener, healthier, safer, and more fiscally stable than we find it today.

I am your voice. I ran for Mayor not for the kicks or to see my name in lights, but because I understand the great responsibility of leading this city at this time —a time both rich with prosperity and rife with inequality. It is my duty to focus on our men and boys of color and find hope where it is missing and the path to opportunity where it has been lost.

I am accountable. To you—the people who voted for me and all those whose support I have yet to earn. It is my honor to wake up early, go to bed late and lay it out all on the line in the 16 hours in between to serve you.

I was elected to lead an ethical government of more 30 thousand hard-working District government employees and to serve with integrity the 660,000 residents of our city.

I will have grand expectations...and I expect you will too. Like winning the Olympics for Washington, DC in 2024...I'll have simple ones, too: -- clear the snow – pick up the trash—pave the streets—synchronize the lights.

I will hire the best and brightest people to achieve those goals. And I am so pleased that he said “yes” City Administrator Rashad Young. Give him a round of applause.

I will encourage creativity, risk-taking and innovation. It is my pledge to take sometimes the road less protected, to see jobs and opportunities when others see only the costs, and to praise my staff when they get it right and be the one to tell you if we get it wrong.

Now you know this, I'm not a "pie in the sky" politician. I believe in making both bold and pragmatic plans and executing them every day. At the end of every day, week or quarter—our team will have to show results. Not just during election season, but for the four full years.

Now you see Joe and Joan Bowser raised me with those good ole North Michigan Park values—where you Do What You Say You're Gonna Do.

I said we'd forge a new path for Statehood and full democracy in the District – and today we launch an amped up federal and regional presence from the Mayor's office.

I'm so delighted to see my favorite county executives from Montgomery and Prince George's here with us today, Ike Leggett and Rushern Baker. I also told you that the time was now to coordinate all our efforts for our public schools—all of them. I've appointed a woman to be Deputy Mayor who can do it, working with Chancellor Henderson and all of our public charter schools. I am looking forward to the new Deputy Mayor for Education reporting for duty.

I told you we were going to focus on all 8 wards...

And the week after I was elected, I showed you my new office in Ward 8, where the Deputy Mayor for Greater Economic Opportunity will work. And Marion would like me to say, I know, that he may not be here, but ward 8 you are not forgotten. You will have my attention today and every day.

Now some believed that it couldn't be done, but I told you that we weren't going to give away the Reeves Center.

And because you united with me, soccer will stay here in the District of Columbia and our community will have a chance to weigh in on the Reeves Center's future.

And if you stay united with me, we'll transform our middle schools, close DC General, and get the street car project right.

There's so much we can accomplish together.

We're have to fight homelessness head-on, and judge ourselves by how we treat those most in need.

We're going to stand with our brothers and sisters in labor to fight for good jobs and good wages. To the men and women who dress our hotel rooms, clean our office buildings and drive our children to school. To them I say thank you and Si se puede!

We're going to make new, innovative improvements to our workforce programs so they actually link DC residents to good paying jobs.

We'll invest \$100 million in affordable housing so that all of our residents have a chance at joining our Middle Class.

We're going to grow the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program, where we teach young people that hard work is rewarding...not just today...but every day.

And we're going to make sure, we'll work together so that the violence that has shaken so many of our communities comes to an end. Little Jayden should not be scared to go home, dear Relisha should be doing the things that little girls do, and no man or woman should live with violence in their home.

And I know this: That you will stand with me as we fight for safety in our streets and in every home.

I'm always going to tell you the truth DC, and this is the truth: we've come a long way in this city together. Great leaders working together, great mayors, great council members. Mayor Vincent C Gray, I want to thank you for your leadership, I want to thank you for the successes that you achieved with your cabinet and staff during the last four years. Let's acknowledge Mayor Gray.

So let's keep making Washington strong.

Let's focus on the small business owner, who spends every penny to follow her dream,

Let's focus on the police officers who protect and defend our communities and the activists who organize in peaceful protest,

Let's focus on our senior citizens, who with their blood, sweat and tears brought us to this very day,

Let's always remember our LGBT friends. While we achieved marriage equality we still have to fight for fair housing and employment in the District of Columbia for all,

Let us remember our rich and wonderful history—filled with the likes of Julius Hobson, Sterling Tucker who is with us today, Marion Barry, Polly Shackelford, and our own freedom fighters—Frank Smith and Eleanor Holmes Norton.

This is a rich history to be proud of.

Let me commit today in front of my friends on the Council of the District of Columbia, and you. That I will be a collaborative mayor, I will respect the branches of this government and your will.

I know that our future is tied with people like Phil Mendelson— he is a son of Ohio and adopted son of ours. He was a ANC commissioner, Council staffer, At-large Councilmember and now Council Chair.

I look forward to my continued friendship with Phil and leading this city in the way that you would have us work together.

I know that our future is also tied to our new elected Attorney General Karl Racine and the Members of the Courts—protectors of our laws and our freedoms.

Our future is with all of us...because We are Washington, D.C.

I have faith that we will do it together with a lot of hard work. We will build a city, worthy of this occasion and your great expectations.

I am ready to get to work!

God Bless the District of Columbia